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Ike's Illness Spotlights Vital National Security

Council Role

BY KENNETH O. GILMORE
(NEA Staff Correspondent)
WASHINGTON — (NEA) —

Five days following the announcement of President Eisenhower's heart attack, 19 men sat down around a table at the White House.

No stenographers were present. No notes were taken. No water glasses. Guards kept careful watch outside the doors.

Meeting started promptly at 10 a.m. It broke up at 12:30 p.m. This was the first high level official government body to meet and not since the President fell ill. That fact alone best describes the all important role of the National Security Council.

For since Eisenhower took office this super secret agency has assumed a position of authority in the U. S. government without parallel.

The President's illness now points up its expanded functions and importance in the federal government.

Recently, for example, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles revealed that U. S. foreign policy decisions could be carried out as a result of NSC policies previously agreed upon and personally approved by President Eisenhower long before his attack.

What are the functions of the NSC? Who attends its hush-hush meetings? What is discussed? What are the results? In view of the increased responsibilities thrust upon the NSC during Ike's recuperation, here are the answers to these questions.

The council meeting on the Thursday after the President's illness was fairly typical of the

129 sessions held to date during the Eisenhower administration. In all there have been 280 since this body was established by law in September, 1947.

Under statute, members in addition to Eisenhower include: Vice President Richard Nixon, Secretary of State Dulles, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson and Director of Defense Research and Development Arthur Flemming.

At the request of the President, NSC meetings are also regularly attended by Treasury Secretary George Humphrey, Director of the Budget Roy L. Nichols, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Arthur W. Radford, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Allen Dulles, Special Assistant to the President on Disarmament Harold Stassen, and Assistant to the President for International Affairs Nelson Rockefeller.

All of these men were present at that Thursday meeting. In addition were Attorney General Herbert Brownell Jr., Assistant Secretary of State Herbert Hoover Jr., Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Lewis Strauss, Civil Defense Administrator Val Peterson, U. S. Information Agency head Theodore Strelbert, White House staff secretary Col. Andrew J. Goodpastor, Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Dillon Anderson and his two assistants, James S. Lay Jr. and S. Everett Gleason.

Special matters that came up before the NSC are closely guarded—so much so that several members of the press who have reported "inside" stories from the council's meetings have been investigated by the FBI.

The broad area of topics discussed, however, are known. They have included such heavy subjects as how to bolster the country's air defense to meet the threat of Soviet H-bomb attack, whether to defend the islands off the Chinese mainland against the Communists and what to do about the Red menace in Indochina.

President Eisenhower has streamlined the NSC into an efficient board of directors or super Cabinet. Chief workhorse is 48-year-old Dillon Anderson. Every Thursday morning for the next few months he will be briefing Nixon, who will preside until Ike returns, on the day's agenda.

Every man who attends the council is given advance reports on subjects to be raised. These are carefully prepared by a planning board of assistant secretaries headed by Anderson.

First on the NSC docket is a 15-minute global intelligence summary by CIA Chief Dulles. Next Dillon brings up items on the prepared agenda. This is followed by what members describe as brisk debate.

Certain decisions will still have to be made by the President. But numerous essential problems are being thrashed out by the council. If Ike's health continues to improve, the Vice President, the Secretary of State and other members will most likely report council decisions to the President in Denver or